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ABSTRACT

The second of two volumes, this report reviews the state of the art of training for educational personnel and presents recommendations to reform training programs in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Philippines. The introductory chapter considers factors involved in children's failure in primary school. The next chapter summarizes current opportunities for schooling and teacher education programs for disadvantaged groups and suggests improvements in the preparation of primary teachers. The third chapter lists the goals of future training programs with regard to the following areas: supervisors' abilities to plan and guide educational activities and teachers' mastery of subject matter, communication skills, pupil/teacher relations, community involvement, and analysis and amelioration of learning problems. Also enumerated are 17 suggested inservice training workshops and long-distance programs to improve current teaching and supervisory skills and parent understanding. The final chapter presents guidelines for planning workshops and describes six pilot workshops currently proposed for these countries. (CB)

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LEARNING NEEDS AND PROBLEMS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Report of Technical Working Group Meetings

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Volume II:

Training of Educational personnel

UNESCO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EDUCATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
Bangkok, 1983

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Report of Technical Working Group Meetings
Bangkok, Thailand, 6 - 12 September 1983

Volume II:
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

			Page
Preface			1
Chapter One	:	Introduction	3
Chapter Two	:	An Overview of Training Programmes for Educational Personnel in the Region	7
Chapter Three	:	Proposed Training Programmes in the Region	11
Chapter Four	:	The Implementation and Follow-up of Programmes in the Region	21
Annexes	:	I. Agenda	23
		II. List of Participants	24
		III. Composition of Technical Working Groups	26
		IV. Opening Address by Mr. Raja Roy Singh, Assistant Director-General, Unesco Regional Office for Education in the Asia and the Pacific	27

OFFICERS OF THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS ON MEETING THE LEARNING NEEDS OF CHILDREN

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Technical Working Group:

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PREFACE

This is a report of two Technical Working Group Meetings on Meeting the Learning Needs of Children, held at the Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, from 6 to 12 September 1983.

The two Meetings organized in the context of the Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID), were entitled:

1. Technical Working Group Meeting on the Nature of Learning Problems and Future Research

2. Technical Working Group Meeting on Training Programmes for Teachers, Supervisors and Other Concerned Personnel.

In his opening address, Mr. Raja Roy Singh, Assistant Director-General, Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, referred to the high priority assigned by the countries of the Region to the objectives of the Meetings in the context of national efforts in universalizing primary education, with emphasis on access, completion and achievement. He related these efforts to the major Programme Area of Unesco's Second Medium-Term Plan (1984-1989) entitled "Education for All", and its linkages with adult literacy. (See Annex IV for the Opening address).

Fourteen participants from ten countries and a representative from SEAMES reviewed the state of the art in research and training of teachers and educational personnel with reference to the learning needs of children, and in particular to those of disadvantaged population groups, and prepared a synthesis of understandings, plans and experiences and suggested concrete actions on new approaches and topics for future research and reform of training programmes, methods and techniques. (See Annex I for the Agenda, and Annex II for List of Participants).

At the final plenary session, the report was adopted with modifications which have been incorporated.

In the closing session, several participants expressed the view that they were beginning an important task – some called it a new era – for universalizing education to focus on parental education, pre-primary and early childhood education; on new types of research approaches; and better conceived and organized training programmes.

They agreed with Mr. Raja Roy Singh, Assistant Director-General, ROEAP, that a sustained and committed effort needs to be made on the following four fronts, namely:

1. Identify and bring to the notice of Unesco and the APEID network the names of scholars and practitioners who have been working on the learn-

ing problems of children in primary education in the countries, to enable Unesco to expand the group which has participated in the two Technical Working Group Meetings;

2. Prepare an inventory of the studies carried out in each country so that the nature and enormity of the problems is better appreciated by the peoples and policy-makers of the countries of the Region;

3. Explore and disseminate the programmes and projects which have been undertaken by institutions and individuals so that the range of insights and experiences is full; documented, and proper lessons learned from the diverse efforts being made in the countries but not generally monitored;

4. Reflect on the programmes and processes for the preparation of educational personnel; consider the feedback that has been obtained; and disseminate this growing knowledge-base about the problems and prospects of preparation of educational personnel in relation to the problems of learning in primary education.

It was announced by Mr. Raja Roy Singh that within the framework of APEID, a newsletter will be prepared and distributed soon on the universalization of primary education. This will serve as a medium of communication on research and reform, and will also serve to raise the consciousness of people and policy-makers about the problems of learning, with particular reference to children of disadvantaged groups.

The report is published in two volumes: both volumes contain the common Chapter 'Learning Needs and Problems in Primary Education'. In addition, Volume I covers identification of topics for future research and suggestions on organizing the research agenda; Volume II deals with the identification of needs for reforms, and suggestions for undertaking reforms, in preparing teachers and other educational personnel.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Although the potential of children to learn and to benefit from education is enormous, such potential is nowhere near to being fully realized in many countries in the Region. Even when access to primary education is available, participation rates are often disappointingly low, and dropout rates alarmingly high. First, what causes this unsatisfactory, if not unacceptable, situation? And second, how can matters be improved?

To answer these questions, a broad understanding is required of the complex set of factors which is involved in ensuring that children succeed in primary education. Such factors concern children themselves, their teachers and schools, their families and communities, and their societies and cultures. These are considered in turn.

Children

A significant change in perspective on the skills and abilities of young children has occurred during the last two decades. During the earlier part of this century, investigators of child development tended to emphasize what young children could not do, whereas more recently the emphasis has been on what young children can do. In brief, it has recently become apparent that when they enter primary school, young children possess a wider range of intellectual and social skills and abilities then they have traditionally been credited with. This is not to say that school entrants are not limited. Obviously, they typically do not yet possess skills in literacy (the ability to read and write), or numeracy (the ability to manipulate systems of number). Less obviously, while they are good at completing intellectual and social tasks whose purpose is clear to them, they are not good at completing highly abstract tasks which lack a clear purpose. Thus if they see the point of an activity, appreciate its goal, and understand what is required of them, young children can often perform remarkably well. But when they fail to see the point of an activity through its being highly abstract and divorced from their previous experience, then young children often fail to perform well.

With this background in mind, now consider what is expected of children in the primary school. First, it is usually a strange and unfamiliar environment to children, where they are required to behave and interact in novel ways. All schools have a routine and rules of procedure, and children are expected to interact with teachers and fellow students in a more formal manner than they are used to. Many children may be unfamiliar with such procedures, and possess little experience of their practice. Secondly, in primary school, children are expected to acquire highly abstract systems of representation when they are introduced to the 3Rs (reading, writing, and arithmetic) – systems whose nature and purposes

young children may well fail to appreciate. Thus in primary school, children are expected to function, socially and intellectually, in ways that are often new and strange to them.

If these quite novel expectations of the primary school are not readily met – that is, if children fail to succeed in early primary school – then this can result in a loss of self-respect. Such children may then doubt their own self-worth, or blame the school, or perhaps do both. Whatever happens, such children fail to build confidence in their ability to learn, fail to enjoy learning and the experience of school, and may then drop out of primary education at an early point – as happens so frequently in many countries in the Region.

These general problems may of course be exacerbated by other factors related to children's personal circumstances. For example, the child may not have been adequately prepared before encountering formal education at the primary level. Children may also suffer various other sorts of disadvantage, including:

i) Language difficulties – the dialect of the school may be different from the dialect of the home in monolingual societies; or children may be instructed in a language other than their first language in bilingual or multilingual societies.

ii) Physical location – children may be located in remote or isolated rural regions, or live in urban slums, places where educational provision is typically poor.

iii) Physical state – hungry children often cannot concentrate on learning.

iv) Social background – children may come from a low socio-economic level family which is under considerable economic and other pressures; or have an ethnic, racial, or caste origin that makes difficult ready integration to the school.

v) Physical, mental, emotional, or multiple handicaps – children who have sensory or neurological dysfunctions, impaired intellectual capacity, experience emotional traumas or difficulties, or who have multiple handicaps – all will have learning problems of some sort.

In summary, negotiating the transition from the informality of the pre-school years to the novelty and formality of the primary school is found difficult by many children. With appropriate teaching in the school, and necessary support from the family, children can usually negotiate the transition successfully. However, when appropriate help and support is not forthcoming from teachers, schools and families, learning difficulties will arise and learning problems may well set in.

Teachers and schools

Factors known to be associated with learning problems in children include inadequacies in the training of teachers. Should programmes of teacher training and development fail to provide teachers with a good understanding of young children's abilities and limitations; or fail to inculcate a sense of commitment to the well-being and progress of children; or fail to provide teachers with appropriate attitudes,

strategies and instructional techniques to encourage the success and achievement of all children – then learning problems are bound to arise. Such problems will also persist, and even get worse, unless teachers are provided with the skills to monitor children's school progress, the ability to recognize when learning problems are occurring, and knowledge of how such problems can be effectively overcome.

In school, while an obvious contribution to learning problems is that of an inadequate physical environment, less obvious but often just as important is the adverse effect of an inadequate learning climate. Harsh or disinterested teachers, inappropriate texts, boringly repetitive drills, lack of a sense of enjoyment – all may contribute to a poor climate for educational success. Also in relation to schools, it is well known that the lack of adequate resource materials, and the use of textbooks and teaching methods which are remote from children's interests and experience – these, too, may frequently lead to learning problems. A further factor concerns highly adverse pupil-teacher ratios – if the number of children in a class is very high, then this can preclude children receiving individual attention from the teacher, some individual attention being essential to the detection and amelioration of learning difficulties. The role of school administration and supervision is also pertinent. Where administrators are not well tuned to the needs of schools, children and their communities, the incidence of learning problems can be expected to be high, as will also be the case if teachers are not appropriately supervised and provided with necessary support where required. At the same time, teachers require a measure of autonomy with regard to the curriculum, and to have sufficient flexibility to reorganize the sequence of learning experiences to meet children's needs and to overcome these problems through effective programmes of remediation. Educational policies and practices should be organized with the need for teacher autonomy and flexibility in mind.

Families and communities

The role of the family and the community in supporting the endeavours of children in primary education is paramount. While good teachers and good schools will do all they can to help children learn; without the advice, support, and encouragement of the family and community, children may frequently fail to adjust to school and so experience learning problems. It is unfortunately the case that appropriate support from families and communities is frequently not forthcoming to many children. This is particularly so in families and communities disadvantaged by poverty, remoteness, and isolation. As they are already under economic pressure, parents may encourage their children not to remain in school beyond a certain level, but instead to leave school to work and so help alleviate the family's impoverished circumstances. As adverse socio-economic circumstances are often associated with low levels of parental education, parents themselves may not value education to the extent that is required for their children's educational progress and success. Further, if parents have had little or no benefit of education themselves, they may be unable to inform their children of what is expected in primary education, and be unable to assist and encourage children who encounter learning difficulties. Likewise, communities disadvantaged by impoverishment and illiteracy are unable to provide general support for children in education, nor can they provide particular

support in the form of community resources and facilities such as libraries and other learning aids.

Societies and cultures

For children to succeed in education, their educational success needs to be valued and expected by the child's culture. Moreover, the society must be prepared, or assisted, to enable such educational success to be secured. In societies and cultures where the provision of equal educational opportunities for all – girls as well as boys – is not adequately supported, participation rates, retention rates and completion rates in education are low, while the incidence of learning problems and difficulties is high. In such circumstances, the learning needs of children are clearly not being met. Thus while the cultural strengths that different societies possess should be recognized and built on, the ways in which successful universal primary education can enhance societies' existing strengths need constantly to be made clear, to parents and local communities, to national governments, and to the international community.

This Chapter began by asking what causes learning problems in primary education – problems which lead to a lack of progress and achievement in education, and which often result in unacceptably high dropout rates. Factors related to children, teachers and schools, families and communities, and societies and cultures have now been briefly indicated. The learning needs of children are reasonably well known, as are the learning problems that frequently occur. We can therefore now turn to the second question with which this Chapter began – namely, how can matters be improved?

One way of beginning to answer this question is to consider how teacher training programmes may be improved. As the role of the teacher in primary education is of great importance, effective programmes need to be devised which will provide teachers with the necessary skills and competencies to prevent, or identify and overcome, children's learning problems. In the next chapter of this Report, present programmes for training educational personnel in the Region are reviewed; improvements which could be made to training programmes in the Region are those proposed in Chapter Three; and the way in which such proposed improvements could initially be implemented in the Region is indicated in Chapter Four.

Chapter Two

AN OVERVIEW OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL IN THE REGION

As education functions in a social setting, the nature of that setting determines who enjoys opportunities to attend school, what kind of education is provided, and to what level. There are several factors which tend to deprive children of schooling opportunities: the general economic condition of parents, the topography of the land, social traditions including ethnicity, the degree of exposure to the forces of modernization, and the attitudes of parents as to how much, and in what ways, education is imparted to their children.

There are barriers in the education sector itself, particularly the inequitable distribution of educational opportunities. Several ethnic and occupational groups simply do not appreciate the importance of education, and there are areas in which children are handicapped both physically and socially.

An overview of teacher training programmes in ten participating countries of the Region can be organized under the following headings:

1. Extent of variations in schooling opportunities

In Afghanistan, literacy and adult education programmes have been intensified, and motivational programmes have been organized to encourage women to participate. Out-of-school children's programmes and continuing education programmes for women have been started as pilot projects, and in light of experience and evaluation, these will be extended throughout the country.

In Bangladesh, economic inequality and social disparity has caused educational deprivation and learning problems, particularly among the urban poor, the rural disadvantaged, and the female population in general.

In India, approximately 70 million children were enrolled at primary level in 1980. Enrolment in rural areas was 75 per cent. Girls constituted 37 per cent of enrolments in rural areas and 45 per cent in urban areas. According to a 1976 survey, wastage rates are higher in rural schools (52 per cent) than in urban schools (28 per cent). Among various reasons responsible for such dropouts were: irregular attendance in schools, adverse parental attitudes towards child education, low educational performance of the children, lack of motivation for learning from home, and caste and age at the time of school admission. In India, for some time now, special attention has been given to the education of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes – the two major disadvantaged groups. The distribution and character of the tribal population is of such a nature as to permit separate educational provisions made exclusively for tribal areas.

In Malaysia, despite achievements and improvements in educational facilities, the number of children unable to read, write and do arithmetic has been increasing,

even after several years of schooling. The poor performance of these children is attributed to their varied and disadvantaged backgrounds – they come from highly adverse circumstances, such as over-populated urban areas and less developed rural areas. Similar experiences have been found in the Republic of Korea and Thailand.

In Nepal, where 18 districts are officially declared as 'remote areas' or 'difficult districts', about 64 per cent of primary school age children are enrolled in such districts. The proportion of girls enrolled is a mere 27 per cent.

In Pakistan, approximately 7 million children are enrolled in primary schools, which is nearly 50 per cent of the primary school age group (5-9 years). 67 per cent of enrolments are boys, and 33 per cent girls. The dropout rate is very high, about 50 per cent of children enrolled in primary schools dropping out before they complete the fifth grade. The poor financial conditions of parents, unattractive school atmosphere, heavy curricula, deficiencies in teaching, and the use of multiple-purpose textbooks are among the principal factors underlying the high dropout rate.

2. Teacher education programme for various disadvantaged groups

In Bangladesh, the training curriculum for primary teachers has been revised and the duration of training will be increased from one year to two years in 1984. Primary schools have been recognized as centres of community activities, to encourage wider community participation through local management committees. The training of secondary teachers has been made uniform for all the training colleges, and the curriculum now includes a subject entitled "Education and Development".

As a response to the learning problems of children in general and of disadvantaged groups in particular, the New Elementary School Curriculum of the Philippines aims to: "increase the quality and efficiency of depressed, disadvantaged, and under-served schools through a systematic approach". It seeks to improve pupil achievement, reduce dropouts, raise participation and retention rates, and increase the ratio of teachers to pupils, With this in view, a Ministerial Memo was issued in 1983 on Policies and Standards for Teacher Education, which states that: "in order to make teacher education responsive to the demands of a changing society and the need for a national identity, each teacher education institution should have built-in mechanism for a continuous self-assessment of its instruction, research and extension service capabilities, and programme thrusts". The Teacher Education Curriculum aims to prepare teachers to ensure that children attain mastery of "basic subjects" and convey desired Filipino values. The Curriculum attempts to integrate theory and practice, and to provide field-based experience.

Afghanistan established the Institute for Specialization of Teachers in 1982, in order to train and upgrade the professional level of teachers, and to prepare teachers, school administrators, and other related personnel for special education purposes.

Teacher training in Pakistan represents a hierarchy, from the Primary Teacher's Certificate of Training, to the B.Ed., to the M.Ed. The lowest rung of training

relates to the preparation of primary school teachers. The courses at present are heavily academic in character, and require more emphasis on practical classroom situations. Experience shows that teacher education programmes do not deal with 'specifics' in living situations. Teachers are not given adequate chances to tackle the problems of basic skills for different categories of learners.

In India, courses for primary teacher education have been developed along lines suggested by the National Council of Teacher Education. Theory papers such as: 'Teachers and Education in the Emerging India Society', 'Educational Psychology', and 'Working with the Community' have sufficient potential to provide learning experiences to prospective teachers. These provide an understanding of the conditions and problems of disadvantaged sections of society, the nature and problems of learning, and educational provisions for meeting such problems. Recently, efforts in India have also been initiated to develop teacher education programmes directed particularly towards the educational needs of children of various categories of disadvantaged and deprived groups.

Nepal has designed several training structures to train different types of teachers. A major thrust concerns the preparation of teachers for remote and rural areas. The programme adopted for the training of primary women teachers is also noteworthy.

In Malaysia, orientation courses for the implementation of the New Primary School Curriculum were carefully planned, at both national and state levels. Teacher training programmes have also been extended from two to three years' duration. Specialist teacher training programmes in remedial education, language, counselling, and library science have been provided. Regular in-service courses are also conducted to upgrade and update teachers' professionalism. Guidance programmes are also given to teachers to help them overcome children's learning problems.

3. Suggestions to improve the preparation of primary teachers

On the improvement of training programmes, Pakistan suggests that performance criteria should be developed strictly in accordance with the realities of the situation obtaining in a country. However, they should be neither too mild nor too exacting. The middle path is considered the most feasible route to reform efforts.

On guidelines for the improvement of training programmes, the Philippines has suggested that in selecting objectives for training programme: "the basis should be the concrete needs of the individual students including the disadvantaged groups, rather than some abstract notion of what is good for society. Since the need for the individual are not isolated from the society of which he is a part, the objectives of programmes may reflect what the society values. While educational programmes for the disadvantaged vary in their nature and scope, they have in common the dual goals of remediation and prevention. They are remedial in the sense that they attempt to fill the gaps – social, cultural, or academic – in the child's total education. They are preventative in that they try to forestall either initial or continuing failure in school and later life". The Philippine guidelines also include provisions for selective admission policies; an indication of the competencies, abilities, and attri-

butes of effective teachers; and an indication of effective content, methods, materials, and evaluation.

Nepal's strategy is to strengthen its remote area teacher training programmes, as well as to develop alternative structures for the in-service training of teachers.

The Republic of Korea has suggested that schools must develop a better understanding of the problems of disadvantaged children, and translate this into educational programmes, the training of teachers and administrators, and the planning of appropriate curricula and instructional methods.

India suggests that training programmes for teachers, supervisors, and other educational personnel, related to the learning problems of children in general and those from disadvantaged groups in particular, should enable successful trainees to develop certain desired competencies.

Chapter Three

PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN THE REGION

In making proposals on training programmes required in the Region to meet the learning needs and problems of children in primary education, a number of important factors needs to be borne in mind so that an appropriate rationale for proposed programmes may be adopted.

First, in many countries in the Region there is an under-supply in adequately trained and qualified teachers, particularly at the primary level, and particularly among disadvantaged groups in remote or isolated areas. In considering the availability of teachers, quantity as well as quality is important, given the dearth of teachers in certain parts of the Region. While the provision of adequate numbers of teachers is primarily the concern of governments, the quality of teachers is a proper professional concern of educational agencies. The skills of teachers, who may themselves lack sufficient proficiency in reading, writing, and arithmetic, require urgent improvement in certain parts of the Region. Teachers also need to be provided with the competencies, skills, abilities, and attitudes which are appropriate to assisting children with learning difficulties. Teacher training needs to impart appropriate methods of instruction, proficiency in teaching basic subjects, and an appreciation of the purposes of curricula. Training should also not be confined to the pre-service stage. Rather, teacher education and development should be a continuous process, with appropriate in-service and refresher courses provided on a regular basis. In addition to such formal training programmes, considerable thought needs to be given to measures which need to be devised for untrained, practising teachers.

Thus a single strategy for teacher training and development may not be appropriate in the varying circumstances which prevail throughout the Region – the particular needs and problems of individual countries need to be recognized, and different measures devised for handling different situations. The recruitment of men and women to the teaching profession in the Region is a case in point. While Bangladesh has at present an inadequate number of female teachers, in the Philippines it is male teachers who are not adequately represented.

Thus in summary, some of the major difficulties and inadequacies at present in teacher training and recruitment include insufficiencies in the number and quality of teachers in remote and backward areas; a lack of emphasis on providing teachers with an awareness of the nature of children's learning problems and providing them with means to cope; imbalances in the number of male and female teachers; and an over-emphasis on subject matter rather than on the child.

As noted in Chapter One, young children may find the transition to primary schooling more difficult than is often realized. Also when they do enter school, there is often wide variation between the abilities of a group of children: at this stage in development, individual differences can be considerable. The implication for teacher training programmes is that teachers should be alerted to these facts,

and prepared to deal with them, and in particular trained in how to effectively engage the help and support of parents and communities. Some successful moves in this regard have been made in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. Providing children with a chance to adjust, and prepare for formal learning during the first few months of schooling, is another effective strategy that teachers might adopt.

Another important aspect of teacher training concerns the preparation of teachers for the introduction of new curricula. (Generally, the topic of introducing new curricula deserves attention, including the involvement of teachers and other educational personnel, the appropriate preparation of teachers, information on teaching strategies to be employed, and the communication of information about the change to parents and the community.)

The professionalism of teachers should also be addressed in adequate teacher training programmes, and attention paid to professional ethics and inculcating a sense of professional responsibility.

Training programmes also need to provide teachers with appropriate classroom management techniques, so that teachers can devote attention to children at the individual level. This is particularly important in the early detection and remediation of children who encounter learning difficulties. In relation to learning problems that arise from deficiencies in sight or hearing, teachers should be trained to detect the signs of such problems, and trained to enlist the assistance of child health personnel.

With learning problems in general, training should be made available to allow teachers to detect and overcome the majority of educationally-related problems, both in pre-service and in-service programmes. The requisite skills and competencies need to be provided in such training.

With respect to the supervision of teachers and the provision of support services, a programme of training related to the learning problems of children would necessarily imply orientation of school supervisors to help them understand the background factors of learning, and to recognize their essential role in helping teachers create conditions conducive to better learning. The role of the supervisor has to be positively directed to providing requisite guidance to the teacher, for the teacher's improvement rather than simply indicating weak points. Supervisors should be very helpful in identifying the various impediments that can come in the way of the efficient functioning of teachers. In addition to keeping abreast of new developments in the content and teaching of the 3Rs or the basics, supervisors should be ready to demonstrate what constitutes good teaching, making use of innovative methods, materials, and evaluation techniques.

Personnel at various levels responsible for different support services such as policy formulation, budget provision, and administration, also have a role in organizing and conducting various regular and special programmes directed at the improvement of learning. For example, the provision of learning resource centres, cluster schools and complex schools, would not be possible without the availability of adequate support services. Those providing such support services require to have knowledge of children's learning problems, and to know how they might be met, particularly in disadvantaged groups.

As noted in Chapter One, parents, families and communities can make a fundamentally important contribution to the successful education of children. A concerted programme aimed at the amelioration of the learning problems of children would therefore include an element of parent education and involvement, in an effort to improve the learning of children. Parental involvement could be ensured to some extent by providing a number of activities like parent-teacher meetings, parental visits to schools on special days, house-to-house visits by school teachers and keeping parents informed about children's progress. The need to bring schools and communities closer together is being increasingly realized by educators and social workers. For example, community work has been envisaged as a school activity. In order to involve the community and seek its assistance in respect of the learning problems of the children, teachers and other resource personnel will need to be adequately oriented with regard to the understanding, abilities and skills required for performing this important function. In India, the latest framework of teacher education developed by the National Council of Teacher Educators, and accepted by almost all the states, provides for 'working with the community' as an important component of the curriculum, with 20 per cent of the time allotted to it. Special training programmes can also be conveniently organized in this context.

Appropriate assessment helps teachers understand children's problems, and to adjust the approach required to enable children to succeed. In various countries in the Region, evaluation is used more as an instrument for diagnosis of learning weaknesses and to guide the child towards further improvement, rather than as a means of determining whether or not children should proceed to the next school level.

From the point of view of the learning problems of children, a higher priority needs to be given to the preparation of diagnostic tests and their administration, which will help in identifying specific weak points in learning in specific areas, particularly reading, writing and arithmetic. Experiences gained in this context in various countries indicate that it would not be realistic to expect primary teachers to learn how to construct diagnostic tests of their own. A system needs to be devised to develop such tests. Organizing National Testing Services could be an important step in that direction, and in the Philippines, for examples, there is already a National Educational Testing Centre.

In connection with assessment and evaluation, particularly in the context of the learning problems of children, there is consensus that it should be directed to aspects other than the scholastic performance of children. Of particular concern to the teacher are personality variables such as the child's self-concept, self-confidence, emotional stability, motivation, and other affective dimensions of personality.

Evaluation of the child is not the function of formal testing alone, as it has been frequently mistaken to be. Performance of the child, scholastic or otherwise, can be judged in non-testing informal situations, in and out of the classroom, provided teachers are sensitive to and careful about relevant indicators in children's behaviour. The teacher is likely to develop the skills of objectively observing children's behaviour after appropriate training.

One of the well-known principles of evaluation of children in the school situation is that it is not the absolute performance at a particular point that should be taken into account, but rather the trend in performance over a period of time. This can be obtained by keeping a cumulative record of various tests and observations, showing increasing, decreasing, or constant trends in progress.

Expected outcomes of training programmes: competencies, abilities, attitudes

In formulating a training programme, the most important issue is to determine what competencies, abilities and attitudes are expected to be developed in the trainees after they have undergone training. Such expected outcomes also indicate what objectives, purposes, contents and methodologies should be adopted in training programmes. Relevant competencies, abilities and attitudes can be arranged under broad categories, in accordance with the wide range of functions of the teacher in the context of meeting the learning problems of children.

1. **Mastery of basic skills/subject matter**

Some important expected outcomes of the proposed training programmes have to be specified in relation to the need for teachers to master basic skills and subject areas, for example:

a) master basic skills like reading, writing and arithmetic and other subject matter; and

b) keeping abreast of developments in science and technology.

2. **Teaching/communication skills**

In the context of the learning problems of children, one of the most important functions of the teacher is to adopt effective teaching/learning strategies. A number of competencies, abilities and attitudes can be identified in relation to this function, for example:

a) being able to take care of individual differences;

b) being able to integrate learning with play;

c) being aware of, and competent in, employing various effective techniques of teaching;

d) being able to make instructional materials; and

e) encouraging independent and creative thinking.

3. **Pupil-teacher relationships/interaction**

Appropriate pupil-teacher relationships and interaction are likely to minimize many learning difficulties and remove many others. The following teacher attributes would be helpful:

a) being competent in establishing good human relationships;

b) expressing parental-like affection to the child;

c) inspiring children by one's behaviour;

d) being friendly, sympathetic and helpful, but also reasonably firm in discipline;

e) being optimistic and cheerful in behaviour with children;

f) being patient in dealing with children;

g) being free from harsh tendencies;

h) being emotionally stable and self-controlled;

i) having a deep feeling of love and sympathy for learners;

j) taking teaching/learning as a joint venture of teachers and learners;

k) being able to create a relaxed, but highly educative, classroom atmosphere; and

l) valuing high moral integrity, and abiding by ethical and spiritual principles.

4. Parent-community involvement/education

A substantial number of learning problems, particularly those of children of disadvantaged groups, are rooted in the conditions and problems associated with parents and the community. A programme of amelioration of such problems has necessarily to be directed towards the involvement/education of parents and the community. Teacher training programmes should therefore aim at developing related competencies, abilities, and attitudes. For example, the teacher should be conscious of his or her significant role in the realization of the socio-economic goals of the nation. Teachers should develop a feeling of involvement and concern in the national and international issues affecting the security of his or her nation. They should consider the uplift of disadvantaged groups as an important national priority. They should:

a) be acquainted with various community resources which can be used for improving teaching and learning;

b) be able to establish rapport with each child, parents and the community;

c) be able to hold an interview with the child, parents and community leaders;

d) be able to mobilize community resources for the amelioration of the learning problems of children;

e) take an interest in the problems of children and the community; and

f) be respectful of the child's personality, parents and community.

5. Analysis of learning problems

A training programme for meeting the learning needs of children must equip the teacher with the competencies and abilities to enable him or her to analyse the learning problems in terms of various factors contributing to their genesis. This should be specified as one of the learning outcomes of training programmes. For example, the teacher should be able to:

a) recognize various common learning problems;

b) understand various personal and environmental factors that effect the quality of learning;

c) understand the socio-economic background factors responsible for the learning problems of children in disadvantaged groups;

d) be able to identify children having learning problems;

e) be sympathetic towards the conditions and problems of disadvantaged groups;

f) not be biased in judgements due to differences in the socio-economic or ethnic backgrounds of children; and

g) appreciate the fact that children's learning problems generally originate from factors beyond their control.

6. Amelioration of learning problems

After analysing learning problems in terms of their causes, teachers should be able to take appropriate steps within available resources for remedying the problems. Relevant competencies, abilities and attitudes include:

a) having a good grounding in special techniques of remedial measures and group guidance;

b) being able to conduct co-curricular programmes effectively, and

c) channeling the energies and potentials of learners in appropriate directions.

7. Educational system, policy, planning, administration and supervision

In addition to teachers; supervisors and other educational personnel also play important roles in ameliorating the learning problems of children. For their training, a number of expected competencies, abilities and attitudes have to be identified, which may include:

a) being able to organize, manage and guide teaching/learning activities in schools;

b) having competence and willingness to secure active co-operation of teachers and parents;

c) being able to nourish, develop and sustain the will to work among teachers;

d) having skills in developing good human relations;

e) being deeply concerned for the intellectual, moral and social growth of learners and teachers;

f) having competence and willingness to demonstrate new techniques of teaching to teachers and colleagues;

g) being able to provide enlightened guidance and leadership to supervisory staff and headmasters and teachers;

h) having deep concern for the improvement of education and for the welfare of supervisors and teachers;

i) being able to initiate, organize and promote academic activities;

j) being able to provide administrative and financial cover for supervisory staff in the conduct of academic and other related activities; and

k) understanding the legal aspects of education and appreciating the rights, privileges and corresponding responsibilities of teachers.

Identification of relevant training programmes

After having discussed various factors related to the learning problems and their remediation, training programmes which deserve immediate consideration are now indicated.

1. A Short-term Training Workshop in Teaching Beginning Reading

This proposed training workshop is in recognition of the value of the ability to read as a tool for learning and success in schooling, and in recognition of the urgency of teaching this ability effectively in Grade I. It is designed to update the participants' competencies in initial teaching of reading. Specifically, the training workshop aims to develop and increased awareness and deeper understanding of the nature of the reading process, the nature of the learner, and prerequisites to learning to read; learning to develop a genuine love for reading; developing diagnostic reading tests in beginning reading; and developing instructional and other testing materials in beginning reading.

2. Identification of problems and strategies for educating parents about the needs and problems of children

Experience has shown that many of the problems faced by children can be overcome if parents are properly oriented towards the needs and problems of children. As the family is the first social group in which children live and grow, it seems essential that parents be involved in children's education. Such parent training cannot typically be effectively executed through formal means of education; hence a non-formal approach will have to be devised to reach masses of parents in the shortest possible time.

3. Orientation of primary teachers in the needs and problems of children

Research is constantly revealing new evidence about the nature and problems of children, their learning, patterns of social interaction, and a whole array of psychological stresses confronted by them at different stages of their development. A synthesis of this evidence needs to be provided to primary teachers in quick and efficient ways. One possibility would be to use distance learning techniques, Alternatively, workshops could be held where possible involving psychologists, researchers, guidance and counselling experts, and teacher educators, where a synthesis of such findings is presented, and where the preparation of learning packages for the orientation of primary school teachers is organized. Such packages should then be made available for teachers unable to attend such workshops.

4. Training of primary teachers in programmes of language and basic skills of reading and writing

Research has revealed that children from disadvantaged groups generally suffer weaknesses in reading and writing, and may need a programme to help them in this regard. Teacher training should provide opportunities for teachers to understand the nature of such programmes, and provide skills for developing and conducting them.

5. Training of primary teachers with regard to testing and guidance related to the learning problems of children of disadvantaged groups

The working teacher, in the context of the problems of learning of children of disadvantaged groups, has to play the dual role of understanding the child and the nature of his problems, and providing non-technical help to overcome problems. This requires on the teacher's part the acquisition of competencies in handling various kinds of scholastic and non-scholastic tests, and providing guidance to chidren.

6. Orientation of primary teachers with regard to remedial programmes specially directed at the amelioration of learning problems of children of disadvantaged groups

Remedial programmes are considered to be a part of regular school activity for helping children to overcome their special weaknesses of learning. This is more urgent in the case of children of disadvantaged groups who have to face various kinds of impediments to learning. The primary teacher needs a systematic training with regard to the theory and practice of these remedial programmes.

7. Production-cum-training workshop on development of learning materials

Teachers should be invited to attend organized seminars and workshops where specific skills are taught to handle disadvantaged groups. At the same time, relevant teaching and learning materials and test items, etc. should be provided, suitable for the teaching of disadvantaged groups.

8. Development of methods for improvement in teaching arithmetic during the first two years in school

Modern mathematics has been introduced in several countries in the Region. Teachers are not familiar with some of the new concepts and methods of treatment of the subject. Numeracy, being a basic skill, demands efficient handling from the early school days. There is therefore a need to train teachers in this area.

9. Training of teacher educators in the methods and techniques of research

In principle, every teacher should be in a position to conduct research on the day-to-day problems of pupils, and to develop alternative strategies to overcome these problems. This cannot be done effectively until teacher educators engaged in primary level programmes are themselves inducted in the techniques of research with special emphasis on the needs and problems of children. Special training programmes therefore need to be undertaken to orientate teacher educators in this regard.

10. Remote Area Primary Teacher Training

This programme should be primarily aimed at upgrading the academic and professional competency of primary school teachers in remote areas for schools in remote areas have not been able to attract enough teachers. Under this training scheme, teacher education programmes should be designed to suit the needs of the remote area, and training programmes could be launched on the spot. If trainees are recruited at a local level, and if the training is organized in the rural vicinity, trainees would be more motivated to join local schools after completion of training.

11. Training Programme for Women Teachers

This programme can be addressed to prospective female teachers. It is expected that the presence of female teachers would motivate reluctant parents to send their daughters to school.

12. Use of Radio for Primary Teacher Training Programme

This programme can be very effective and useful for difficult areas, where problems of transportation and communication prevail. Teachers can be provided with packages of self-learning materials and radio receivers to listen to radio broadcasts on entire courses. A contact session could also be organized to solve teaching/learning problems on a person-to-person basis.

13. Pilot Training Workshops for Development of Instruments for Measuring Teachers' Verbal Communication Skills

Research studies suggest that teachers are often ineffective in teaching. This proposition implies that teachers are unable to communicate with students effectively. This situation warrants the examination of the areas and extent of weakness of teachers' verbal communication skills.

14. Development of Teacher-made Objective Tests in (a) The Mother Tongue, (b) Mathematics, (c) English for Grades I-V

A World Bank assisted Universalization of Primary Education project in Bangladesh has developed a battery of pupil achievement tests. This battery may in the near future be administered to pupils in areas outside the project areas. Teachers need to know the basics for preparing and administering these tests and interpreting their results. This will give them competence in administering classroom tests, and students will be oriented to the type and nature of the examination they will soon take.

15. Rural and provincial primary teacher training through mobile training teams

This programme should primarily aim at upgrading the academic and professional competence of primary school teachers. Primary schools in villages have not been able to attract enough teachers with requisite qualifications. Under this training scheme, the teacher education programme would be designed to suit the needs of each area in respect of their interests, needs and resources. This would be achieved through mobile training teams who would visit various places in the provinces and organize on-the-spot training programmes.

16. Distance learning-and-contact programme

Teachers could be given the opportunity to complete their in-service training through: (a) radio and television programmes; (b) correspondence courses; and (c) newsletters, pamphlets, Checklists and assignments should accompany these courses. From time to time, contact programmes would also have to be organized.

17. Teaching skills workshops

Workshops may be organized to develop specific skills of teaching. Such workshops should incorporate micro-level and other skills required to make teaching effective.

Chapter Four

THE IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF PROGRAMMES IN THE REGION

It has been envisaged by APEID that in the near future, pilot training workshops may be organized in the Region at national level for various categories of educational personnel. Guidelines to be followed by pilot training workshops are set out below, as is an indication of those workshops which member countries of the Region have expressed an interest in organizing.

Guidelines

The following is the format for designing proposed pilot workshops:

National Pilot Training Workshop Design

1. Content/introduction
   - National policy/goals
   - Justification/Rationale.
2. Title and nature of the training programme
   - Objectives and expected outcomes.
3. Organizational framework
   - Institution responsible
   - Collaborating agencies/institutions.
4. Target group: personnel to be trained
   - Level, number and responsibilities to be specified.
5. Pre-workshop activities.
6. Trainers/resource persons.
7. Techniques and methods of training.
8. Training materials
   - To be developed
   - Already available.
9. Schedule of Training/Agenda/Programme
   - Activities
   - Venue
   - Duration.
10. Evaluation of workshop or programme.
11. Follow-up
    - Effectiveness
    - Dissemination.

Tentative proposals for pilot training workshops were made in their personal capacity by participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines. Main elements of workshop proposals are summarized as follows:

Tentative plans of national pilot training workshops by countries

Country	*Theme of workshop*	*Target groups*	*Organizing centres*	*Workshop durations*
Afghanistan	Training of teachers for remedying problems of learning arising out of introduction of new textbooks and teachers' guides	Grade 6 teachers, specialists of Teacher Training Institutions, Curriculum Development Centre, etc.	Compilation and Translation Department of Ministry of Education, Afghanistan	10 days
Bangladesh	Training in Development of Teacher-made objective tests	30 participants consisting of head teachers, Thana education officers, and curriculum developers	Institute of Education and Research, Dhaka University	12 days
India	Training workshop of key personnel in respect of learning problems of children from disadvantaged groups	Teacher educators from SIEs/SCERTs and officers from State Departments of Education	NCERT	10 days
Nepal	Training in needs assessment of disadvantaged children	Primary school headmasters, supervisors, and teacher educators	Institute of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu	10 days
Pakistan	Orientation of teacher educators of elementary colleges of education in the dynamics of primary education with special reference to the needs and problems of younger children	25-30 teacher educators engaged in pre-service and/or in-service education of primary teachers, currently employed in the Elementary Colleges of Education and Education Extension Centres	Institute of Education and Research, Allama Iqbal Open University, in collaboration with the National Institute of Psychology and Provincial IERs	10 days
Philippines	A short-term training workshop in teaching beginning reading	Training of 30 primary school teachers teaching Grade I; orientation of 30 principals and 30 supervisors following the training of teachers	College of Education, University of the Philippines	20 days

Annex I

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Election of officers of the Meeting and consideration of the provisional schedule of work
3. Review of country experiences and research studies on the nature of learning problems of children
4. Critical problems and issues related to major learning problems of children; and critical appraisal of the state of the art in designing, developing, executing and evaluating training programmes for teachers, supervisors and other concerned personnel
5. Conceptual framework and methodological consideration for future research on learning problems; and development of designs for future training programmes
6. Suggested agenda and designs for future research at national level and co-operation in the region; and development of a draft plan for national pilot training workshops, by countries
7. Consideration and adoption of the draft report of the Meeting

Annex II

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Annex III

COMPOSITION OF TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS

Technical Working Group 1: Nature of Learning Problems and Future Research

Chairman	Dr. Aree Sunhachawee	(Thailand)
Group Rapporteur	Dr. A.N. Sharma	(India)
Members	Dr. Robert Grieve	(Australia)
	Mr. B.N. Aryal	(Nepal)
	Ms. Shaheen Chowdhri	(Pakistan)
	Prof. Isabel Tablante	(Philippines)
	Dr. Jong Seung Lee	(Republic of Korea)
Secretariat	Dr. A. Latif	
	Dr. I. Ayman	

Technical Working Group 2: Training Programmes for Teachers, Supervisors and Other Concerned Personnel in Context of Learning Needs of Children

Chairman	Dr. Shamsul Haque	(Bangladesh)
Group Rapporteur	Dr. B.P. Gupta	(India)
Members	Dr. Aziz Ahmad Yusofzai	(Afghanistan)
	Dr. B.K. Mallik	(Nepal)
	Ms. Hanim Abdul Rahman	(Malaysia)
	Dr. Paz G. Ramos	(Philippines)
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Secretariat	Dr. H.K. Paik	
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	Mr. T.M. Sakya	

Annex IV

Address by Mr. Raja Roy Singh, Assistant Director-General, Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, at the Opening Session, 6 September 1983

Distinguished participants and observers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here with you this morning at the opening of the two Technical Working Group Meetings on Meeting the Learning Needs of Children, with Special Reference to Disadvantaged Population Groups.

On behalf of the Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific and on my own behalf, I wish to extend a warm welcome to all the distinguished participants.

As you might have detected, your distinguished assembly is made up of two groups. As a matter of fact this meeting is a portfolio of two meetings. The work of both groups arises out of the problems of learning of children; one group is to identify and study problems, determine how much we know about them and how this knowledge base can be expanded. The second group addresses itself to the very important and practical task of how we prepare teachers so that they can deal with the learning problems of children. The two groups will be having a few common sessions and will then part to pursue their respective enquiries and come again at the end.

The problems of learing which you are considering have an immediate importance to the developing countries. They relate to the efforts to universalize primary education.

Universalization of education at the primary level has been one of the key concerns of Unesco, particularly in this region. It is an essential component of the major programme area of Unesco's Medium-Term Plan (1984-89) entitled "Education for All", where it is complementing to adult literacy, and a component of the strategy for democratization of education. In the context of the Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development, universalization of education, with its three prominent aspects of universal access to primary education, almost total completion rate, and maximum achievement, is one to receive the highest priority.

Learning problems of children at the primary stage have become a major concern in the policies and programme of the countries of the region. This concern reflects the general awareness among the peoples of the countries even where universal enrolment has been ensured, that there are the major blocks in learning, particularly in the basic subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic; achievement in these area affects the rates of survival and completion in the primary grades. APEID is, therefore, formulating a project for raising the achievement of children through effective preparation for entry to primary education; introduction of more effective strategies and methods of instruction in schools; involvement of and effective com-

munity participation in primary education; and appropriate orientation of teachers and other educational personnel.

I am grateful to your Governments for enabling you to participate in these Technical Working Groups which are expected to make enormous impacts on the situation of primary education in terms of policies and plans of the Governments of the region in respect of universalization of education, and in ensuring that all children at this stage would receive the best opportunities for development and achievement.

I am happy to inaugurate the Meetings, and wish every success in your deliberations.

SELECTED APEID PUBLICATIONS RELATING TO LEARNING NEEDS AND PROBLEMS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

* *Educational policy, curriculum development and implementation. 1978.*
* *Population evaluation. 1978.*
* *Universalizing education; new techniques for preparing educational personnel. 1979.*
* *Universalizing education: strategies for development and use of instructional materials. 1979.*

Teacher education: directions of change. 1979.

* *Universalizing education: linking formal and non-formal programmes. 1979.*

Evaluating pupil development – productive skills training; moral education. 1980.

Towards better health and nutrition. 1981.

Curriculum development, by Malcolm Skilbeck (Occasional Paper No. 9).

Language development and inteliectual functioning, by Kevin F. Collis (Occasional Paper No. 10)

Integrating subject areas in primary education curriculum – a joint innovative project. 1982.

In-service primary education in Asia. 1982.

Multiple class teaching and education of disadvantaged groups; national studies: India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Republic of Korea. 1982.

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* Out of stock

The Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) has as its primary goal to contribute to the building of national capabilities for undertaking educational innovations linked to the problems of national development, thereby improving the quality of life of the people in the Member States.

All projects and activities within the framework of APEID are designed, developed and implemented co-operatively by the participating Member States through over one hundred national centres which they have associated for this purpose with APEID.

The 22 Member States participating in APEID are: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Turkey.

Each country has set up a National Development Group (NDG) to identify and support educational innovations for development within the country and facilitate exchange between countries.

The Asian Centre of Educational Innovation for Development (ACEID), an integral part of the Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, co-ordinates the activities under APEID and assists the Associated Centres (AC) in carrying them out.

The eight programme areas under which the APEID activities are organized during the third cycle (1982-1986) are:

1. Universalization of education: access to education at first level by both formal and non-formal means;
2. Education for promotion of scientific and technological competence and creativity;
3. Education and work;
4. Education and rural development;
5. Education and urban development;
6. Educational technology with stress on mass media and low-cost instructional materials;
7. Professional support services and training of educational personnel;
8. Co-operative studies, reflections and research related to educational development and future orientations.